

Bishop Levi J. Coppin, D.D.

A. M. E. Church

Residence: Philadelphia, Pa.

BISHOP COPPIN presides over the conferences of Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina. He was born of free parents, in Fredericktown, Md., December 27, 1848.

He attributes the success of his early training to maternal influences. "My mother," he says, "taught me to read and was the supreme inspiration of my youthful life, both for knowledge and goodness."

He attended the public schools of his native county after the war, and in 1869 went to Wilmington, Del., where his studies were continued under public and private instructors. After teaching school for a brief period he entered the ministry of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, "impelled by an ever-present consciousness of a divine call to the work."

He studied theology in the Protestant Episcopal Divinity School, Philadelphia, graduating in 1887. In the work of the church he was rapidly advanced, and in 1888 was elected editor of the *African Methodist Episcopal Church Review*.

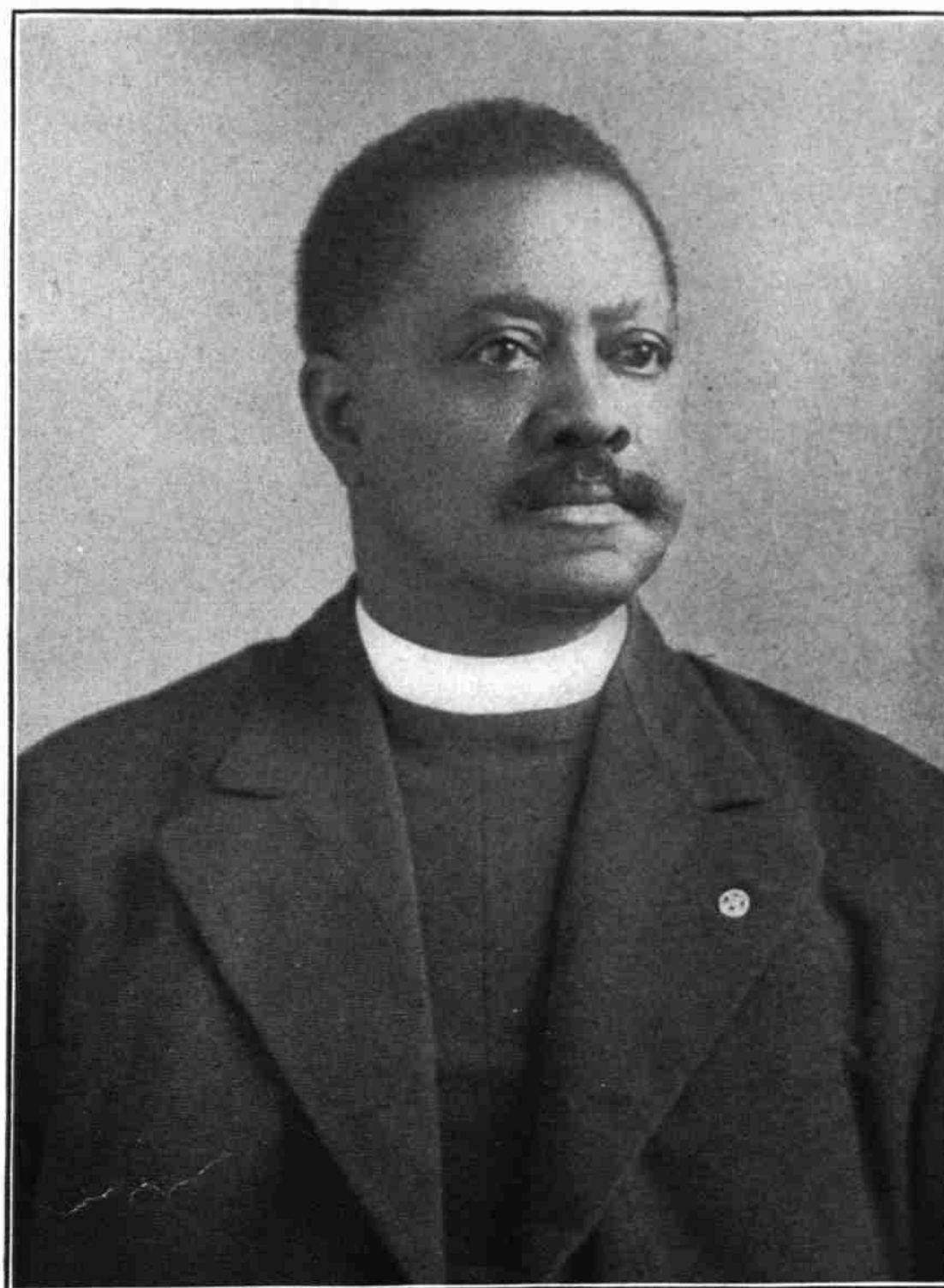
Elected bishop in 1900, he spent four years in charge of the work in South Africa, with headquarters at Cape Town. In addition to the regular episcopal supervision of the churches in his district in the South during the present quadrennium, holding annual conferences and visiting the churches, his special work is in connection with the development of Kittrell College, Kittrell, N. C., one of the leading Southern institutes for the education of the Negro.

Greatest Needs of the Negro Race

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FIRST of all, and greatest, is the need of better home conditions for the masses.

Those who are in the grasp of poverty and ignorance are in the majority. We have many splendid homes, with culture and refinement, where the children are coming up amid healthful and proper influences, but we have many more where refinement and comforts are not known. These are found in the morally and physically unhealthy portions of our large cities, and in country places that are far removed from railroads and civilizing influences. These homes are most prolific of children, and multitudes of youth are coming daily to manhood and womanhood without having had the very fundamental principles of a useful



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and successful life. These homes must be reached and influenced for good. The foundation of life is laid in the home. Here, then, the problem begins.

The church as an agency has a better opportunity to begin the good work than any other. The school, with simply mental culture, will sadly fail unless the youth are given right ideas of life at the fireside. This brings us to consider the great need of intelligent mothers, with right ideas of morality and religion, and who know the sacredness and value of honest industry.

The church and school must work hand in hand to reach this neglected class. Especially should the church feel it to be its bounden duty to seek out and help these unfortunate youth through the Sunday-school by home missionary efforts that are not second in importance to foreign missionary enterprise. I sometimes fear that "distance lends enchantment," and that in our zeal to carry the light to those who are far away, we neglect our opportunity to do the work that is near us.

When by the combined efforts of the church and school we produce a different class of parents, we can hope to see a great change in the young citizens of the race.

The kind of education that is given in the schools is of the highest importance. A literary training, even with the much-talked-of industrial features, cannot produce strong men and women if that training is Godless and little or no attention is given to morality. Teachers should be selected with as much care as are preachers, else it will be found that one is tearing down while the other is building up.

Education should be of the most practical kind. The head, the hand, and the heart should receive due and equal consideration. Industrialism cannot make up for a lack of mental enlightenment and moral integrity any more than can these guide the youth to success in life who have not been taught the dignity and importance of work. In the work of education, none of these essential elements should be neglected or dealt with as being of minor importance.

These suggestions are not merely a matter of opinion but are borne out by the history of all races that have reached a high state of civilization, and our people will not be an exception to this universal rule.